

JFFS

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CHICAGO PREMIERE OF DEMON POND--As mentioned in the last issue of the JFFS Newsletter, the supernatural drama DEMON POND (YASHAGAIKE) made its Chicago premiere on Sept. 27-28 at the Francis Parker Japanese Cinema. Both performances were well attended, although few JFFS members were in evidence. Unfortunately, each night's screening was marred by poor projection. Except for the final two reels, the entire film was shown out of focus. At times, 5-10 minute sequences ran on as a total blur, the projectionist seeming to have no conception of how to focus the film (much to the mounting impatience of the audience). Some of the film's most impressive visual and dramatic sequences were either totally lost or severely hampered as a result. For instance, the initial meeting between Gakuen and Yuri takes place in a garden setting, breathtakingly lit by the westering sun. However, the audience was unable to see much more of this than an orange blur. The eerie atmosphere of the spirit world during Princess Shirayuki's speech also suffered a similar fate. Despite this major disappointment, the film itself was well received. Thankfully, technical difficulties were cleared up before the spectacular conclusion which featured a tremendous flood that destroys the village. Combining some superb miniature work and good process shots, the special effects were both impressive and believable. Tamasaburo Bando was captivating in his dual role as Princess Shirayuki, the Queen of Demons, and as young Yuri, the bell striker. A lengthy treatment of this film will appear in the JFFS Yearbook, authored by Japanese member Atsuko Yokotani. Atsuko is regular contributor of both news and artwork to the JFFS.



Tamasaburo Bando as
Princess Shirayuki

夜叉池

Speaking of contributions and the JFFS Yearbook, already the end of the JFFS's first year of existence is fast approaching. Materials are being assembled for the production of our 1980 Yearbook, but we are sorely lacking in contributions, written, drawn, or otherwise. This is the chance to show off your talents to other members. Small line drawings in particular would be appreciated.

THE RETURN OF THE MAN IN THE MOONLIGHT MASK--Currently in production from Nippon Herald Films is the live-action feature film, MOON MASK RIDER. Budgeted at \$1.2 million, this film is scheduled for completion by the end of 1980. This film is based on the early Japanese cycle hero MAN IN THE MOONLIGHT MASK who wears a white scarf over his face and sports a turban with a crescent moon. The ads proclaim: "Now he's back for justice! Riding on his special equipped Honda 750

Turbo.....Japan's all-time hero, THE MOON MASK RIDER!"

MORE ON YAMATO BE FOREVER--A brief plot synopsis of Office Academy's latest YAMATO feature has been supplied to the JFFS. The story of this new film is as follows:

In the year 2202, a mysterious red comet streaks through the solar system. Flashes from the small red comet annihilate the population of all the planetary bases which had been established throughout the system--and it is headed straight for Earth. Finally, the comet, actually an enormous neutron bomb, lands on Earth and drills itself into the surface of the planet. At the same time, a great number of alien battleships, three-legged war machines, and soldiers invade the Earth. It is the army of the Black Star Empire, the same race of aliens who had been defeated at Iscander in YAMATO THE NEW VOYAGE. The aliens defeat the Earth Defense Force's automatic fleet and capture Earth Defense Headquarters. However, Kodai and the crew members of the Yamato escape from Earth, but Yuki is wounded and captured by the aliens. The Black Star Empire demands the surrender of the Earth's government, threatening to destroy the planet with the neutron bomb unless its demand is met. Earth is defeated.

Kodai and the Yamato's crew members reach the small asteroid Ikarus, where the Yamato is buried beneath the surface to undergo extensive redesign. The ship is now equipped with many improved powers--the super warp engine, wave energy cartridges (launched through the main guns), etc. With its new captain, Yamanami, at the helm, the Yamato breaks free from its dry dock and journeys beyond the Black Galaxy in hopes of finding a way to neutralize the bomb and thusly the aliens' hold on the Earth. A new crew member, Mio, is introduced as Sanada's niece. But Kodai knows her to actually be Saasha, the child of his brother Mamoru. Kodai is surprised to see her, as she looks like a 17 year old girl. She explains that Iscandarians matured very rapidly. Saasha feels love for Kodai, even though he is her uncle.



After defeating the fleet of the Black Star Empire, the Yamato travels through a black hole and at last finds the enemy planet. (At this point, the "Warp Dimension" effect is experienced) This planet is the Earth, just where they came from! The leader of the Black Empire, Skullgarth, tells Kodai and his crew that this is the Earth of 200 years in the future.

This great climax however goes to a disappointing conclusion as the Yamato predictably destroys this imitation Earth with the wave gun, and of course during the battle, Saasha and Capt. Yamanami and some lesser crew members are killed. Thanks to Kuni Takikawa for this plot synopsis.

.....AND NOW IT'S YAMATO 3--The brand new TV series, YAMATO 3, began airing in Japan on October 16. The storyline is in fact not an adaptation of YAMATO BE FOREVER. Instead, this series, scheduled to run for a full 50 episodes, features the return of Desler, and introduces two new enemy races--the Garman and Bollar. In fact, the ancestors of Gamiras are the Garman!

In the first episode, the Garman and Bollar are engaged in a fierce inter-planetary war. The Garman fire three enormous proton missiles at an enemy planet. Two of the missiles strike the enemy planet, completely annihilating it and the surrounding space fleet. However, the third missile misses its target and continues on deep into space--headed straight for our Solar System. A new character named Simon, an astronomer, discovers the missile and determines its ultimate destination--



the sun! All attempts to destroy the missile with conventional weaponry are useless. Unless something can be done to destroy or divert the missile, the sun will be destroyed and the Earth will have to be evacuated. The Yamato is given a new mission--to somehow avert this disaster or to find a new home for the people of Earth. After a couple stints as deputy captain of the Yamato, Kodai has finally been promoted to captain of the Yamato. Among the new crew members is Domon, a young man who greatly admires Kodai, but he is upset when Kodai assigns him to the document section instead of the fighter team.

YAMATO 3 features some of the new music from YAMATO BE FOREVER in addition to the familiar Yamato themes. The first episode contained some interesting animation effects in the destruction of the planet by the proton missile. The JFFS Newsletter will continue to report on the progress of this series in future newsletters.

JAPANESE FANTASY IN CANADA--Canadian member Jeanette Eilke informs us that SPACE CORSAIR: CAPTAIN ALBATOR (SPACE PIRATE CAPTAIN HARLOCK) has returned to French-Canadian television along with the tremendously popular GOLDORAK (MAZINGER Z). Quite a few of the French-Canadian people to whom she has spoken watch and enjoy ALBATOR, citing that the show's adult handling of political corruptions and loyalties, as well as other thematics, attracts a lot of adult viewers to the show...as well it should! BATTLE OF THE PLANETS appears to be a big hit on the English language channels, showing five times weekly. STARBLAZERS is doing less well in Canada, only being available in New Brunswick and Ontario so far. Jeanette promises us some news on the European scene next time. Thanks Jeanette!

ULTRAMAN '80 continues its popular first run on Japanese TV, and now even some old villains have returned to battle our latest superhero from the M-78 Nebula. Most prominent of the returning monsters is Gomora 2. This newer version looks quite similar to its original counterpart as seen in the two-part episode of the first ULTRAMAN series. However, Gomora 2 does have one marked difference from the original--a second set of horns on its head pointing downwards just beneath its other pair of horns. Alien Baltan also appears set to return to do battle with '80. Apparently ULTRAMAN '80's human counterpart has abandoned his job as a teacher and now works full-time as a member of the UGM.

Yet another in the long procession of masked riders has just zoomed onto the airwaves in Japan. Ishimori Productions' latest KAMEN RIDER series cycle hero is called S-1 (Super One). His costume is quite similar to that of other recent entries, though the eyes on the helmet have a distinctive tear-drop shape to them. This superhero confronts some interesting alien beings, one of which looks remarkably similar to the monster from the movie ALIEN. It also appears that there may be some outer space and giant monster elements in this series, somewhat of a departure from the normal (if one can call it that) Kamen Rider series.

UPCOMING RELEASES FOR 1981.....Destined for early 1981 release from Toei will be a new animated science fiction feature CYBORG 009--LEGEND OF SUPER GALAXY. Directed by Masayuki Akeki, the film is a spin-off from the CYBORG 009 TV series. Produced by Shotaro Ishimori, it details the exploits of nine crimefighting super robots, each endowed with a specific super talent....also from Toei in February will be the action-drama JOE THE SEA PETREL, starring Yusaku Matsuda and directed by Kinji (MESSAGE FROM SPACE) Fukusaku.....next year's TV season will not be lacking for a new entry into the field of live action giant robot shows. Following in the footsteps of DENZIMAN will be the new series SUN VULTAN.

SUN VULTAN will feature the usual team of crime fighters with their individual super vehicles which combine to form a powerful giant robot. SUN VULTAN will battle the usual syndicate of evil giant monsters.....nothing new on a new Godzilla film. Sources in Japan seem to indicate pessimism at the outlook for a new Godzilla epic, saying that it will probably not be reconsidered at least until Toho's 50th Anniversary.

NOVEMBER RELEASES FROM TOHO.....November 8 saw the theatrical release of a three hour condensation of the U.S. television mini-series SHOGUN....the end of the month is the targeted release date for a new animated feature film version of the classic tale THE WIZARD OF OZ.

Currently playing on Japanese TV is the Japanese answer to the British marionette TV program THUNDERBIRDS--it is called X-BOMBER. More on this topic next time....

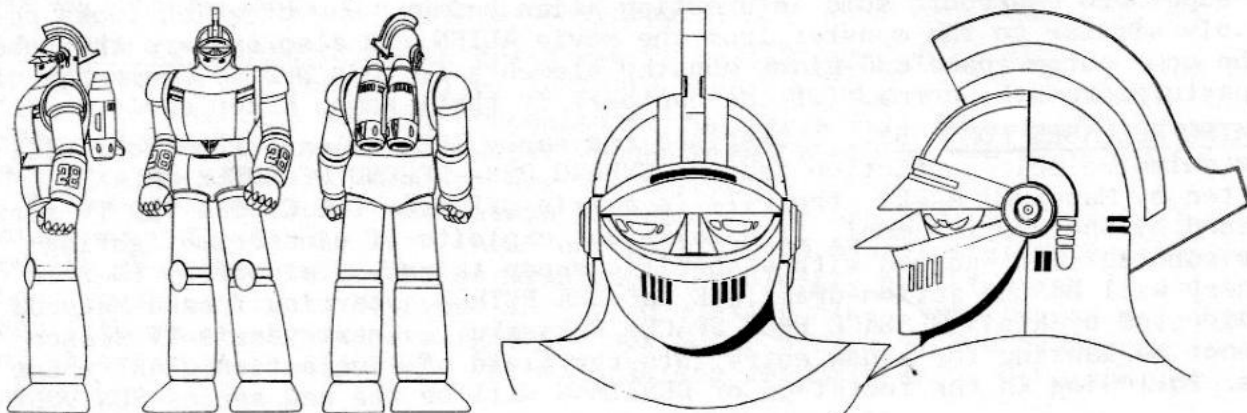
The JFFS is pleased to announce that our monthly screenings have been able to resume. Saturday, November 15 was a showing of ARREVEDERCI YAMATO which drew an excellent turnout of approximately 21 members and guests. Next on the screening agenda will be a showing of THE MYSTERIANS. This Toho classic will be shown at 2:00 pm on Saturday, December 13 in the 9th Floor screening room at Colombia College, 600 S. Michigan Avenue. For the next few months, screenings will alternate between video and film programs.

JFFS members may be interested in contacting some new fan clubs established by some JFFS members. Each offers newsletters and merchandise to its members. For information, contact:

GALAXY EXPRESS/CAPTAIN HARLOCK FAN CLUB
c/o Phil Gilliam
4033 Outer Drive
Nashville, Tennessee 37204

BATTLE OF THE PLANETS FAN CLUB
c/o Kevin Grays
1503 Lakefront Ave.
E. Cleveland, Ohio 44112

As it may be obvious to members by this time, JFFS Newsletters are actually issued on a bi-monthly basis instead of on a monthly basis as was originally hoped for. This is mainly due to the inconsistencies and difficulties in accumulating enough news and illustrations from Japan with which to fill our newsletters. As the JFFS has no direct lines of communication with any of the major studios in Japan for either news or illustrative materials, we must rely entirely on Japanese fans for a majority of our information. Such being the case, both the mails and translation difficulties cause unforeseen delays. As a result, the newsletters will continue to be published on a bi-monthly basis, but in the expanded 4-page format, with occasional supplements. Merchandise offerings should continue as before. However, as the still offering has received small response, anticipated future offerings of color stills and behind-the-scenes stills will have to be re-evaluated. That's it for this issue of the JFFS Newsletter...til next time, sayonara!



Model Sheet for the new GIGANTOR (TETSUJIN 28) series